GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL AND MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1394
ANSWERED ON:23.07.2002
ABANDONED COAL MINES
PRABHUNATH SINGH

Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of coal mines lying abandoned at present;

(b) whether the Government propose to take over those coal mines; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a): The coal mining leases held by the private sector for the coal mines which were not taken over through the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, were terminated with the enactment of the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Act,1976, except for those leases which were held by the privately owned steel companies. These mines were without proper geological or mine plans and without any assessment of reserve in regard to quality or quantity of coal, which are essential for scientific exploitation of coal. Therefore, these leases were only terminated so that it would be possible for the Central Government, Government company or corporation to mine wherever necessary after the necessary exploration has been made as to the extent of the deposits of coal etc. As such these mines lie abandoned. Such leases included the following.

i) leases granted by ex- Zamindars/ Rajas before the commencement of the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957.

ii) Valid leases with private parties, which escaped being identified for taking over by the Central Government at the time of nationalisation.

iii) idle dormant leases covering closed or abandoned mines.

In the above cases it was not easy to co-relate leases with mines as more than one mine could be there in a single lease hold and /or a single mine could have been created through the process of amalgamation of more than one lease hold. Full details of all such mines are not available in the records of the Government. Such being the situation, no definite number can be associated with the abandoned mines.

(b) & (c) : No, Sir. Mining leases for coal mines can be obtained by the public sector undertakings or those in the private sector allowed to do captive mining for specified end-use after taking into consideration factors which include the availability of reserves, the production plan, the fact whether the mine to be obtained through a mining lease has been prospected and whether with regard to quantity and quality of reserves it is feasible and viable for undertaking coal mining etc.